

## ***The Terms of Reference for the End TB Transmission Initiative Working Group (ETTi – Powering Airborne IPC).***

### **Background and Rationale**

The lack of concern paid to airborne transmission of *M. tuberculosis*, coronaviruses, influenza viruses, measles virus, and other airborne pathogens in health care settings, congregate settings, and general community settings has created an environment suitable for transmission of these microorganisms, as well as drug-resistant TB (DR-TB), among health care patients/clients, health care workers, and the community. Once WHO, CDC, and other organizations acknowledged that the SARS-CoV-2 virus was primarily spread through the airborne route, this group was called upon to highlight and provide technical guidance in implementation of airborne infection prevention and control (IPC) measures.

Weak health systems in general, and absence of effective airborne IPC measures have caused DR-TB to emerge in countries where TB short-course chemotherapy was introduced in the absence of a strong (public health) DOTS program. The potential implications of TB (and DR-TB) transmission in community, health care and congregate settings on global TB morbidity and mortality have highlighted the urgent need to refocus attention on TB IPC, with a clear vision of phased expansion of successful activities through national TB programmes (NTPs) to provide coverage incorporating and building on the lessons learned from successful IPC models. This process requires commitment of all partners to common goals and co-ordination of stakeholder actions.

Similar weaknesses in health systems have caused preventable morbidity and mortality due to seasonal influenza as well as the millions of unnecessary illness and deaths due to SARS-CoV-2 virus. Airborne IPC principles promoted by ETTi will assist in the prevention and response to TB and future global pandemics.

To assure a wider recognition of past and future activities of ETTi, ETTi shall be branded as **ETTi – Powering Airborne IPC**.

### **Mission of the ETTi Working Group**

To advocate for and lead operationalization of policies and expansion of the evidence base, through research, education, training and scaling up of effective implementation of airborne IPC.

### **The Goal of the ETTi Working Group**

In line with our mission, we intend to promote effective airborne IPC by:

- Advocating for airborne IPC as a worldwide priority and achieve those goals by collaborating with TB and airborne IPC partners, NTPs, academia, donors/funding agencies, civil society, and other stakeholders.
- Advocating for increasing financial investments in TB research and innovation in airborne IPC.
- Building global capacity for airborne pandemic preparedness (SARS-CoV-2 and beyond).
- Helping to build and disseminate the evidence base supporting best airborne transmission control practices with an emphasis on TB and COVID-19 and tracking worldwide implementation.
- Helping professionals develop, implement, and evaluate best practices through research and dissemination of results.

- Engaging civil society in supporting a global movement to prevent airborne transmission of disease everywhere.
- Promoting and improving approaches to data sharing to advance scientific discovery and dissemination of findings, reducing duplication of efforts, and facilitating the translation of evidence to national and global policies on airborne IPC.

### **Terms of Reference**

The ETTi working group is an interdisciplinary professional group working in TB and other airborne infections and dedicated to ending the transmission of *M. tuberculosis* and reducing the transmission of coronaviruses, influenza viruses, measles virus, and other airborne pathogens worldwide.

The 2022 - 2027 Strategic Priorities are the following:

**Priority 1:** To advocate and communicate for preventing airborne transmission as a strategic priority worldwide with emphasis on ending the transmission of *M. tuberculosis* and reducing the transmission of coronaviruses, influenza viruses, measles virus, and other airborne pathogens.

**Priority 2:** To advocate and communicate need to foster an inter-sectoral approach to incorporate innovative technologies and their rapid uptake for preventing airborne transmission of TB, SARS-CoV-2, and other airborne spread microorganisms.

**Priority 3:** To encourage and promote research capacity building on ending the transmission of *M. tuberculosis* and reducing the transmission of coronaviruses, influenza viruses, measles virus, and other airborne pathogens within the health care system, considering fostering this research in undergraduate courses and graduate courses (master's and doctoral programs).

**Priority 4:** To assist in disseminating the scientific evidence base for implementing conventional and novel airborne IPC interventions.

**Priority 5:** To promote improvement in airborne IPC at global, national, and local levels through:

- Advocacy
- Leadership
- Capacity building
- Training and education
- Health system strengthening
- Monitoring and evaluation of interventions

### **Mode of Operation**

#### **The form of the ETTi Governance**

The ETTi is a working group of the Stop TB Partnership. A Core Group (CG) team has been established to coordinate and expedite the work of the ETTi WG.

#### **The Secretariat**

The Secretariat is responsible for serving both a financial and an operational role. The Secretariat is answerable to the Core Group. Financial duties include, but are not limited to, be the principal recipient of the ETTi grant(s) from the Stop TB Partnership (STP), expend funds as directed by the ETTi Chairperson and/or ETTi Vice-Chairperson and in accordance with the

STP-approved budget plan, and provide monthly accounting to ETTi Chairperson and ETTi Vice-Chairperson. Operational duties include coordinating ETTi activities per STP-approved Project Plan, planning and logistical support for in-person and virtual meetings, reporting (annual and semi-annual financial reports, quarterly progress reports, and drafting of project plans and budget plans), outlining and coordinating quarterly newsletters, prepare written reports of meetings, distribute reports and other materials as directed, maintain contact list for ETTi Working Group, manage resources provided for the functioning of the WG. The Secretariat may request approval to hire consultants to support these duties.

### **Composition**

The ETTi WG will be composed of members with broad representation of institutions, professions, and countries with experience and/or interest in TB and/or airborne IPC.

Key constituencies include:

- WHO – Ex Officio Member
- USAID – Ex Officio Member
- Technical partners
- Clinical Practitioners
  - Physicians
  - Nurses
  - Infectious disease control experts
- Microbiologists
- Laboratory experts
- Engineers (environmental, mechanical, civil, *et al.*)
- Architects
- Academia
- Health care managers
- Health care facility managers
- Others with interest in airborne IPC
- Civil society
- National TB programmes
- Regional laboratory initiatives
- WG Task Forces representatives (liaison)
- Implementing partners
- Volunteers and staff from resource-constrained settings
- General IPC specialists
- Worker safety and occupational health specialists
- Quality assurance and accreditation specialists
- International public health programs
- Pandemic preparedness programs
- Representatives of national disease control programmes:
  - Ministries of Health
  - Ministry of Education
  - Ministry of Science and Technology
  - Ministry of Justice
  - Ministry of Labour
- Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- Professional associations
- Patient associations

- Bilateral and multilateral aid agencies
- Research institutions

Membership is open to any individual, institution, or agency which supports the goal of the ETTi WG. Non-Core Group members will be invited, based on their potential contribution to the activities, to join in the various activities of the ETTi WG. On an annual basis, the Secretariat shall update the list of ETTi WG members and request WG members to renew their interest.

## **Ways of working**

### **Annual Meeting of the ETTi WG**

- The ETTi WG will meet at least once per year, pending availability of resources. The goal is to have at least one face-to-face or virtual meeting annually.
- The site of the meeting(s) is not fixed; rotation between high-burden countries and industrialized countries is desirable. Members are requested to consider hosting meetings.
- The ETTi WG meeting(s) will be a forum with the overall goal to expand airborne IPC with emphasis on TB and other airborne infections.
- The ETTi WG meeting(s) will serve to support activities aimed at expanding airborne IPC internationally, and as a venue to share experiences and build linkages with other IPC institutions and stakeholders.
- The ETTi CG will present a summary of annual activities to date as well as solicit input to be used in the development of work plans and budget plans.

### **The Chairperson**

- The Chairperson will be a current member of the CG and will be selected by the CG. The candidate will recuse herself/himself from the voting.
- The Chairperson of the ETTi WG will be responsible for chairing the meetings of the ETTi WG and CG. The Chairperson will be assisted by a Vice-Chairperson for this function.
- The Chairperson must initiate the formal vote of the CG on issues of key priority for ETTi WG mission and follow the decisions of CG majority. The Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson will represent the ETTi WG when interacting with STP, other STP working groups, and the WHO Global TB program.
- The Chairperson will have overview of the functions of the ETTi WG and of its associated task forces and will ensure monitoring of the implementation of recommendations of the ETTi WG.
- The Chairperson will serve a term of three years and will be eligible for re-election for a second consecutive term only once without exceptions.
- For up to one year after installation of a new Chairperson, the outgoing Chairperson shall become the Ex Officio Past Chair for one year. The Ex Officio Past Chair shall assist the new Chairperson in the transition by sharing institutional knowledge. If the Ex Officio Past Chair is unwilling or unable to serve, the out-going Vice-Chairperson will assume the position of Ex Officio Past Chair. The term limitations as a CG member are held in abeyance during the Chairperson's term in office.

### **The Vice-Chairperson**

- The Chairperson will be assisted in all normative functions by the Vice-Chairperson. The Vice-Chairperson will also assist the Chairperson during meetings of the ETTi WG and its associated bodies.
- The Vice-Chairperson will be a current member of the CG and will be selected by the CG. The candidate will recuse herself/himself from the voting.

- The Vice-Chairperson will serve a term of three years. In the event the Vice-Chairperson is selected during the term the Chairperson is serving, this period will be shorter (until the end of the term the Chairperson is serving). The Vice-Chairperson will be eligible for re-election for a second consecutive term as a Vice-Chairperson or for election as the Chairperson at the end of his/her term as a Vice-Chairperson. The term limitations as a CG member are held in abeyance during the Vice-Chairperson's term in office.

### **Selection process for the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson**

A specific individual, not an organization or institution, is elected to be the Chairperson or Vice. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson shall serve for a three-year term with an option of one renewal for the same duration, if supported by a two-third majority of ETTi CG members. The term of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson is independent of the term as a CG member.

Three months before the end of the Chairperson's or Vice-Chairperson term, the current Chairperson, with the assistance of the Secretariat, will call for nominations. Candidates for Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson are nominated by the current ETTi CG members from among the current CG. CG members and the Secretariat will be responsible for the review of nominated CG members and short listing of two candidates. Subsequently, ETTi Chairperson is elected by all members of the ETTi through confidential ballot using secure web-based electronic voting tool managed by the Secretariat.

### **The Core Group**

The CG aims to facilitate and accelerate decision making and guide the strategic direction and activities of the ETTi WG. The CG will have a membership of not more than fifteen members. Members will be requested to allocate time for their function in the CG as they are able and are expected to serve as spokespersons for the work of the ETTi WG in their routine professional work. Members who miss two consecutive CG meetings, primarily for lack of time, will be requested to reconsider their membership to allow room for new active members.

All individual members will be invited based on CG decision to join the CG based on their individual capacity, outstanding skills, and contribution they will bring to the mission of the ETTi WG. They will have a three-year membership into the CG. Members can serve two consecutive terms. The CG will select all individual new CG members based on their application with due consideration of their expertise, geographical representation, gender, and outstanding contribution.

The CG will meet physically at least once per year, depending on availability of resources. Moreover, the CG will meet by telephone or by video conference as required by the Chairpersons or Secretariat.